

## What support can you expect as a Kinship Care Resource?

The Department of Social Services, other agencies and support networks are ready to work with you to support your needs as a Kinship Caregiver.

### Financial

- You will receive an established monthly stipend. The amount is based on the age of each child in your care. This stipend covers the expenses of board and care.
- You will receive a quarterly clothing grant based on the age of each child in your care.
- If you are caring for a child under five years old, you will qualify for the supplemental food and nutrition program through Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

### Medical

- Each child in your care receives medical, dental and psychiatric care through MassHealth.

### Other Support Services

- Each child has an assigned Social Worker who visits the child monthly.
- You will have a worker called a Family Resource Worker, who will make regular visits to your home. Your Family Resource Worker will connect you with programs and resources available in your community.
- You will have the opportunity to attend local support meetings with other Kinship Caregivers and foster families.
- You will be eligible to receive supportive services from the Kid's Net network, a service of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC). Kid's Net offers respite/child care, camp programs, child care training, support groups, advocacy and other programs to help you to help each child in your care.
- You will have access to the Kid's Net Connection Help Line for emergency after hours service **(1-800-486-3730)**.
- You will be eligible to join the Massachusetts Alliance for Families (MAFF), an association of foster, adoptive, kinship and guardianship parents that come together and provide mutual support and advocacy for each other.



Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Providing Safety ★ Establishing Permanency ★ Encouraging Well-Being

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Massachusetts  
Department of  
Social Services

Caring for kids

# KINSHIP CARE

# You can help us change the future, one child at a time!



## What is Kinship Care?

When a child has to leave home due to abuse, neglect or a voluntary request for placement, the Massachusetts Department of Social Services looks to extended family members and other adults who have a significant relationship with the child to become kinship care providers through a formalized relationship.

Kinship care is the full-time parenting of a child by relatives or by adults to whom a child, the child's parents, and family members attribute a "family" relationship.

Kinship families may be related by blood, marriage or adoption or may be no relation to the child, but have family ties based on culture, affection or family values.

Placement with a kinship family is believed to reinforce the child's racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious heritage and to strengthen and promote continuity of familial relationships.

Relatives other than their parents raise more than 1.3 million American children.

The number of grandparents raising their grandchildren has soared more than 40 percent in the last decade.

Kinship caregivers provide a family environment, allowing the child to feel more comfortable in their new home setting. Studies show that children in this type of a home environment readjust more readily with the helping hand of concerned and caring adults.

Caring for a child is not easy. You can take pride that you are helping the child through difficult times to begin healing, adjusting and preparing to face the future with new hope. You can change a child's future as a Kinship Caregiver.

## What is a Kinship Care Resource?

Kinship Care is a formalized role, for which you will need to be licensed by the Department of Social Services.

You will support the child's emotional, psychological and educational development by:

- Listening when the child needs to talk about the fears, confusion or other emotions he or she may be feeling.
- Building the child's self-esteem and encouraging respectful interaction with others.
- Providing non-judgmental support for the child's relationship with his or her parent(s).
- Preparing the child for reunification with parents or other permanent placement options.

## What does it mean to be licensed by the Department of Social Services?

As a Kinship Care Resource, you are licensed by the Department of Social Services. This means that you are approved to care for children who are in the custody of the Department of Social Services. You must meet the standards set by the Department of Social Services to be approved and licensed.

As a licensed provider, you are given an opportunity to offer input on the needs of each child in your care.

You will receive notice of court proceedings and administrative reviews involving the child, and you are asked to participate.

## What are the steps to becoming licensed by the Department of Social Services?

The Department of Social Services needs to know more about you, those who live with you and your home environment before you are licensed. The Department of Social Services follows this diligent process to ensure the well-being of each child in our care.

You can expect to go through these steps as you progress toward licensure.

- The Department of Social Services does a background records check and a criminal background check on you and any person over the age of 14 who resides in your home.
- The Department of Social Services will make a home visit, which includes interviews with each potential Kinship Caregiver and all household members.
- The Department of Social Services validates that your home is physically safe, checking that it meets the standards for Kinship/Foster/Pre-Adoptive Homes.
- You will complete an application.
- You will participate in a home study process, which includes follow-up visits with a social worker.
- You will need to provide personal, medical, employer and school references to the Department of Social Services.
- Once you have been approved, the Department of Social Services provides you Kinship Care Resource training.